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Statement submitted by Help Me See, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

For effective eye-care service, there is a need to train 30,000 cataract specialists throughout the developing world to perform a quick (as little as 5 minutes), very low cost (less than $50) high-quality procedure which corrects cataract blindness and restores visual acuity lost to cataract disease. This will eliminate the disability cost by cataract blindness. In addition, the eye-care sector will contribute to the economy creating highly skilled jobs while reducing poverty and restoring the dignity for more than 20 million blind people.

There is no question about health disparities between rural and urban communities. In our capacity to provide safe cataract surgeries in both rural and urban areas, we have noticed that to support sustainability in rural communities, we must use technology, involve the government on a policy level, and local community for their understanding of local resiliency.

Therefore,

- To build sustainable, resilient and equal health communities in both rural and urban communities,
- Knowing that access to healthcare facilities in both rural and urban communities are essential to alleviating poverty,
- Reminding all member states, private partners and international bodies of the call to provide a universal health coverage to all, despite their geographical location, income, gender, etc....

1) we must discuss how policy makers on a country level can use integrated policy approaches to enhance resilience and inclusion as key enablers to achieve the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and global levels;

2) this high-level meeting at the United Nations and everywhere must serve as a platform for exchange of best practices on how technology and innovation can be leveraged as tools to effectively design a resilient future, while leaving no person or location behind;

3) we must showcase policy instruments and mechanisms that support risk management and reduction across the hazard spectrum, including external shocks and natural disasters;

4) we must discuss how technology and innovation, particularly gender-sensitive solutions and internet-free, can support efforts to strengthen the resilience of public policy and governance structures through inclusiveness, participation and transparency with the view to fostering sustainable and resilient societies.

In conclusion, resilient societies are found everywhere. However, we must do our best to support efforts made in these communities. Active engagement of the civil society is necessary to mobilize public-private partnership financial and technical support needed to alleviate poverty by building sustainable and resilient communities.